Safe Asbestos Removal in New Zealand: What Every Homeowner Should Know

Introduction

Removing asbestos is an important safety step for homeowners and businesses in New Zealand. Even though asbestos use is now tightly controlled, it can still be found in many homes, schools, and workplaces. Breathing in asbestos fibres can cause serious health problems over time, so it's important to have it removed safely by professionals. If you think you might have asbestos on your property, talk to removal experts to make sure the job is done safely and meets New Zealand's rules.

What is Asbestos and Why is it Dangerous?

Asbestos is a naturally found mineral valued for its heat resistance, strength, and ability to keep things warm or cool. It was often used in roofing, walls, floors, and insulation in the 1900s. But asbestos is very dangerous to health when its tiny fibres get into the air and are breathed in.

Once inhaled, asbestos fibres lodge in the lungs and can remain there for decades. Over time, they can lead to severe conditions such as:

- **Asbestosis** – a chronic lung disease caused by scarring of lung tissue.
- **Mesothelioma** – a rare but serious cancer in the lining of the lungs.
- **Lung Cancer** – being around asbestos can raise your risk, especially if you smoke.

Since symptoms might not show up for 10 to 40 years after being exposed, it's even more important to handle and remove asbestos safely.

Asbestos in New Zealand

In New Zealand, asbestos was used heavily in buildings until the mid-1980s. The import and use of raw asbestos have been banned since 1984. Still, many older buildings contain asbestos products.

This includes:

- Roofing materials
- Wall and ceiling linings
- Insulation around pipes
- Floor tiles and adhesives

People still find asbestos when they repair or demolish old buildings. That's why asbestos remains a serious health concern in New Zealand.

Identifying Asbestos in Your Property

A big challenge with asbestos is that you can't always spot it just by looking. It can show up in many forms, like insulation boards or textured wall finishes.

If you suspect asbestos is present in your property:

1. **Do not attempt to disturb it**. Cutting, drilling, or sanding can release dangerous fibres.
2. **Get a professional to check**. Licensed asbestos experts can take samples and test them in proper labs.
3. **Follow safety advice strictly**. If asbestos is confirmed, only trained professionals should handle its removal.

If you try to remove asbestos yourself, you could spread it around your home and put yourself and your family in danger.

How Safe Asbestos Removal Works

Professional asbestos removal follows careful steps to keep fibres out of the air and protect everyone's safety.

1. **Assessment and Planning** – Experts check the building and make a plan that follows New Zealand's rules.
2. **Containment** – The area is closed off with barriers to stop fibres from spreading.
3. **Protective Equipment** – Workers wear masks, special suits, and use safe tools to handle asbestos.
4. **Removal and Disposal** – Materials are taken out with care, put in strong containers, and taken to special places to be thrown away safely.
5. **Clearance Testing** – After removal, air checks show the space is safe to use again.

By following these steps, licensed asbestos removal companies help keep their workers, the public, and the environment safe.

Why Professional Removal is Essential

Asbestos might not seem dangerous if it's left alone, but the risks go up if it gets damaged or handled the wrong way. Hiring professionals gives you peace of mind because they make sure everything is done safely from beginning to end.

Professional removal also makes sure you follow government rules. Trying to remove asbestos without the right training can be dangerous and could lead to legal trouble.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Can I remove asbestos myself?

No. DIY asbestos removal is extremely dangerous and not recommended. Always contact a licensed professional for safe removal.

2. How do I know if my house has asbestos?

If your home was built before the mid-1980s, asbestos may be present. Only professional inspection and testing can confirm it.

3. What happens if asbestos is found in my workplace or school?

The law says that workplaces and public buildings must handle asbestos risks. Professionals are needed to remove asbestos or put safety plans in place for everyone inside.

4. Is asbestos still being used in New Zealand today?

No, bringing in new asbestos is banned. But old buildings may still have asbestos in them.

5. How much does asbestos removal cost?

The cost depends on the project's size, the amount of asbestos, and complexity of removal. Get a professional quote for an accurate estimate.

Conclusion

Asbestos was used in the past, but it can still be dangerous today. If asbestos is disturbed in homes, schools, or workplaces, it can harm people's health. Removing it safely helps protect everyone and is more than just a legal requirement.

If you think there might be asbestos in your building, don't take any chances. Get in touch with a professional asbestos removal team in New Zealand to make sure the job is done safely and correctly.